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Title: Need to distribute essential commodities to poor families through Authorized Retail Dealers in Kerala.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): I would like to place before the House an urgent issue of the state of Kerala. Kerala is a food deficit state with only 15% of the food grain required by it being produced in the state. It depends on the other states, such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar & Gujarat etc. for the balance 85% of its our requirement. Kerala has a large network of fair price shops called ARDs covering every nook & corner of the state of distribute food grains being allotted by the Central Government under Public Distribution System, i.e., rice & wheat. For the requirement of pulses, spices etc. the people have to depend upon the open market, which is highly volatile. The middle & lower classes of the society are finding it very difficult to make both ends meet. Essential commodities under the open market are unaffordable to the BPL families. Most of them are casual labourers or labourers in the unorganized sector who get on an average only ten days job in a month. The Supplico, which is part of the public distribution system in the state, is supplying essential commodities at subsidized rates. But they are able to fulfil only about 25% of the requirement with their 1179 numbers of retail outlets in the state. So, essential commodities need to be distributed through the ARDs to benefit the needy families. I request the Government to take immediate step in this regard.